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PASCA
Programa para fortalecer la
respuesta centroamericana al VIH

**LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT
& GOVERNANCE PROJECT**
Inspired Leadership. Sound Management. Transparent Governance.

The CASUR Sugar Mill in Nicaragua Committed to the Well-Being of Its Workers

“...education is one of our essential safeguards to address the spread and consequences of HIV/AIDS. It helps people assume attitudes and acquire the necessary knowledge to protect themselves against HIV”

Oleksandr Markhay, Human Development Manager
CASUR



The Company's team of nurses and educators participating in the HIV program.
Photograph courtesy of CASUR, S. A.

As a result of the work undertaken by Nicaragua's Private-Enterprise Superior Council (COSEP) to integrate the private sector into the national response to HIV, and with USAID/PASCA'S technical assistance, on April 2013, the Compañía Azucarera del Sur, S.A. (CASUR) started to design its internal HIV policy, which was adopted at the end of that same year.

CASUR is one of the four most important sugar companies in Nicaragua. It employs more than 3,000 workers during the sugar-cane harvest and has 1,500 permanent workers. It is located in the Rivas Department, which borders with northern Costa Rica, so some of CASUR's temporary workers migrate to Costa Rica during the non-harvest season to engage in agricultural work.

CASUR was the first sugar company in Nicaragua to adopt an HIV workplace policy and it is noteworthy because it has promoted this issue with other sugar mills and the National Sugar Producers' Commission (CNPA).

As part of the programs generated by CASUR's HIV policy, 22 promoters have been trained on combined prevention, and they in turn, have given talks on prevention to 2,200 workers during the last two harvest seasons, with COSEP's technical assistance. CASUR has also established an alliance with the Ministry of Health to distribute 3,000 condoms during the sugar-cane harvest and to provide access to free voluntary HIV testing. The sugar mill promotes a work environment that is free from stigma and discrimination toward workers as a result of their seropositive status or their sexual preferences.

Preventing HIV is a policy that has been institutionalized in the sugar mill as part of this company's commitment to its workers and the community.

CASUR's vision is to be a sugar-cane agro-industry constituted vertically to produce sugar, ethanol, and energy, with a permanent commitment to financial, social, and environmental sustainability.

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